

The epistle of one

friend to another, of a strange fyre that was
sene in the aire both longe and brode
almost through al Germany, and what
as well the godly as the vngodly
maye or ought therof to
loke for or feare.

Much salutations re-
membred right wor-
shipfull brother, thys
shalbe to let you vnder-
stande that in the be-
ginning of the yere of
our lord. M. D. LXX. wherein we are
nowe, the thirde after the feast of the
birth of Christ, that is on childermas
day: there appeared ouer our citie and
all the borders of Swicerlande, two
houres afore day the aire beyng clear
a very red fyre, in maner whole toge-
ther, but that white furrowes or stra-
kes came betwene, and it stretched
out longe and brode almost a furlong
brode, although in another place it se-
med narower, but in lengthe thre or
foure times so muche. So that vnto
A. ii. all

The history of strange wonders.

all the beholders in maner a whole mile long towarde y^e North it semed that some village or many, or els some towne had bene on a great fyre. And in many places the neighbours ran together as it were to quench the fire of some of their neighbours: and therwer which thought that thei saw in this fyre of bloudy colour mani white forowes or strakes, very like vnto bundels of speares. But it continued not longe in one place, but remoued many furlonges further, and when it was day or rather towarde e^{ve}, by litle and litle it vanished out of sight being first gathered together at Saggallie in maner of a great tower. By this ye may easily coniecture that this fyre was on the higher parte of the aire, because it was sene so far of, and almost solowed the mouinge of the aire, & yet not on y^e highest aire y^e there like vnto the comets or blasing starres might be kindeled by the element of fire. And this was also faithfully shewed vs, that it was so seen at Zurich, Glarona, Saggale, Constace and euery where round about y^e lake of

The history of strange wonders.

of Aetion, and Venice, and so likewise at Basill, and in the most part of the places of Swicerland, and the Aetians or Grisons. But whether it were sene any further Ipe shall know shortly. And in certain places betwene Suricke and the litle towne Elgia thei say that flames of fire fel down to the grounde and amased therewith a certaine man that traueiled by the way.

And a certaine credible man of the teritorie of Suricke tolde me all the matter, which he did diligently mark.

Fyrst, when the night was cleare, and yet ear it was day it became darker, euen in the setting of the moone it semed vnto him as it wer a certain light to rise from the earth as if diuers beames and of sundrie colours (as when the Sunne by the droppes of raine maketh diuers colours) shuld so by and by arise from the ground as it wer drawen by toward heauen, and there gathered a rednes as though a certaine cloude had wared red, & stode so a lytle while, and anon after a certaine cloud went through the middest thereof, and then was scene a shutting

A.iii. out

The history of strange wonders.

out of fyre as it had bene starres oute
of a burning cloude.

The signification of thys wonder-
full matter, righte learned syr, which
I haue studied vpo to exercise my self
withall, & to fyre vp my minde to y
autho^r of it, I wyte vnto you there-
fore that I may hear your iudgement
vpon the same which I much esteeme.

The signification of the
wonder.

1 For as much as such prodigious
wonders chaunce seldom in thys our
time, and olde men far stryken in age
can not remembze to haue sene anye
such, therfore it is to be feared & looked
for some vnacustomed hap to folowe.

2 The brydeth and bignes of it was
notable, thzough which it was sene
euery where long and brode, and as
it were euery where nere hand, wher
of we diuine and pronunce a greate
euyl to folowe, and that not to one
region alone, and therin al men to be
perplexed and doutfull, to what place
they may chiefly goe, and where
they may resist the ragyng fyre.

The

The history of strange wonders.

3 The colour of the fyre it selfe like
to bloode what betokeneth it but
warre: In whiche the lande shall as
bounde in the blood of the slaine and
all thinges wasted with fyre.

4 And thys calamitie is chiefely
thzearened to those people to whome
so euer thys wonder was seane nea-
rest.

5 And because it appeared before day
lyght and of a sodayne & vnlooked for
and in maner to al persons as yet sle-
ppng, therfore it betokeneth the cala-
mities appocheinge to be looked for
to come vpon manye not thynkyng
nor preparyng them selues, or repen-
ting, and ouer carelesse in themselues
and not only such particular calami-
ties to come, but shortly an vphoped
iudgement of the whole worlde.

6 And that within a shorte time af-
ter this: because this burning of the
aire was seane euery where as it had
bene present & nere as I haue sayde.

7 And because it endured but a
shorte tyme, therfore it maketh vs
hope that the persecution shall not
continue longe.

A. iiii. And

The history of strange wonders.

8 And because by and by after it being vanished away the Sunne arose, we hope the cleare light of the worde of god to be the end of all persecution.

9 And that rednes was not al whole together, but deuided as it were with certaine cleare and bright spaces or furrowes by the which also starres appeared, that signifieth, that in the midst of those calamities and persecutions God wil comfort his elect, and in that fire shall issue out the heauenlye brightnes of the gospel.

10 And now seing this wonder was sene in the beginning of the yere, therfore shal we doute whether this calamitie shall indure a whole yere? For nowe also great motions do begin to come furth, and thei wil come further except god turne awaye great euils, or rather dare we hope because it appeared by & by after the birth of christ that is the thirde day after, within so many yeres hence, that our lord Iesus Christes doctrine wilbe set furth farre and broad and as it were restored againe all falshold being expulled and so the godly to loke for to beginne

The history of strange wonders.

gynne a newe yere and a new kynde of lyuynge.

11. And because that bloudy fyre appeared on childermas daye we do not doubt but that he which was sometime a reuenger of the bloode of the innocent children will now also become a reuenger and punisher for those godly and faithful men, which haue suffered persecutiō and death for his names sake. And for them which as yet remain he wyl be a defender and maintener, so that finallye they wyl acknowledge him to be a father of their cause, and by amendment of life answer therunto and prepare themselves with prayer and sobrietie for the grace that is to come.

12. The shuting of starres as it were the falling of them do doubtles signifie vnto vs, that the day of the great iudgement is at hande. A litle before the which day that such forewarning signes shoulde be sene our Lord Christ hath warned vs afoze hande longe agoe.

But in no age at anye time hath ther be sene so many and so great and

A.v. strange

The history of strange wonders.

Strange wonderous signes euerie
wher abroad as within these few ye-
res: that we ought altogether already
to consider that it is by tokens signi-
fied vnto vs that the latter day is not
farre of, and both by other wonders &
chiefly by this which is not perticuler
no2 terrestriall but almost vniuersall
and celistiall excepte we vtterly slepe
with ouermuch carelesnes and securi-
tie. But first must that Babylonicall
beast beynge stuffed with the bloode of
saintes and yet not filled no2 satisfied
be cast downe, and the sincere gospel
preached agayne throug the whole
worlde. The which that it maye very
shortly come to passe we shal pray vnto
the almightye gracious and great
God by our lord Jesus Christe in the
holy Ghost.

And yet therfore we ought not to pro-
mise a carelesse securitie to our selues
that the kingdō of the prince of Chri-
stes enemies shall decaye and fal: but
except we doe thoroughly take hede to
oure selues by and by wyth amende-
ment of lyfe, and cease to bragge of a
vaine faith, beynge our selues instru-
ted

The history of strange wonders.

fed and furnished with no good wor-
kes, we shall firste be punished by the
same. For seynge oure lyfe of all in
maner for the moste parte answe-
reth not to oure profession we haue
manye wayes deserued moste gre-
uous punishmentes: and more tru-
ly then our aduersaries, for this cause
that in so great lychte of the known
truth, we be kyndled or moued wyth
no feruencye of sincere religion but
wallowe and are wrapped in all kind
of vices and wyll almoste suffer no
discipline eyther pinate or publyke:
And for the moste parte all Magistra-
tes wyll not onely haue Dominion
in the commune wealthe and in Ci-
ties, but they also wyll haue rule in
the church, but they will not comyt
them selues to the common discipline
of the same.

Finally, the pastors and ministers
of the churches for the most parte be
full of ambition, couetousnes, wan-
tonnes, and other vices, & be no bet-
ter than those whome they ought to
teache and feede wyth the worde of
GOD, but rather much worse.

¶ Here

The history of strange wonders.

Wherefore it is greatly to be feared & here the day of the lord draweth vpon vs, and that to vs that were so colde shalbe moued and not to a few of vs and priuately as hath bene hertofore, but a common publike and vniuersal sore of persecution wherewith we shal be warned more then inough: for fro the aduersaries of Christs church and his membres (except God tourne it a way) shal go out the fyre which hath bene of longe time prepared for vs, & from Italie vnto vs and towarde the North (& which way & wonder & prodigious forwarning did incline) shall it come furiously vpon the christians. Notwithstanding we hope and humbly praye vnto the most gracious and mighty god the father of our lord Jesus Christ with lowly and deuot hartes, that this euell may sone after be turned from vs: not for vs but for his name sake, and the holy worshippers of his annoynted. For the bloode of those which longe ago alreadye hath bene moste abundantly spyled & shed or consumed with fyre throughout al Germany, Fraunce, Italy, Spaine, and

The history of strange wonders.

and other regions (by that seven headed and horned and bloudy Babilonical beast with whome the kinges and princes of the earth haue committed and do commit fornication) may now seme altogether to haue burst out of the bowels of the earth wyth a flaminge brightnes, and that the same burning in the ayre betokening a reuenging from the Lord (which is the defender and reuenger of hys) hath mingled together: That al men may see and vnderstande the euident cause of this wonderful forwarning. Wherefore god wil punish together his who he loueth that they may be amended, and wyth them or at the least by and by after the enemies of his name which go forward obstinately in their malice, and in the persecution of the saintes. It becometh vs to acknowledge our faults and to aske forgiuenes and not to despaire by and by at the firste cruell assaute of Antichrist whatsoeuer they be. For he sayth that he is in danger and assauted himself and that on euery side is great falling awayes fro him, & lest he shulde vterly be forsaken

The history of strange wonders.

taken he proueth al thinges to the extremite. We yf we wyll continue in the sincere calling vpon the Lord and remembre to kepe our selves in prosperitie, so many as god wil haue kept safe from these calamities shall proue and see a happy successe and spredynge a brode of the gospell, throughe out the whole worlde: and the ruine and decaye of that prince or ruler which vnder the tytle of the name of Christe is against him being now of late begon wholly to be performed. For this enterpryse of his as it is to be thought to be the greatest so is it to be supposed that it shalbe the laste: and as he did seuer this wonder from the daye that was commynge, euen so it is to be hoped that at the cleare preaching of the Gospel and the last iudgement shortly commynge vpon it, al euil shal haue an ende. So we for our selues ought for to gesse well with good and valiant mindes. For the almyghtye can if he wil deliuer vs from all calamities, at the least if he do not those are happy ones which die strongly in the confession of his name for Christ
and

The history of strange wonders.

and the truth. But vnhappy are they whosoever thynke them selues conquerours agaynst Christ.

That prodigies or wonders be done or styrrd vp by god, contrary to the sayings of the Epicures.

Aristotle in his fyrst booke of celestiall speculation and. v. chapter, in mencionynge of other thynges which he calleth fyre speculations, writeth thus. There be sene sometimes in the night the aire being cleare many appearinges (he calleth them horrible sightes) to mete in the ayre. As be gappynge pittes bloody colours the cause whereof is euen the same, which is of the other aforesaide. But next befoze he had sayd that of a certaine vapour or exaltation that is whot & drie kindled in the hygh aire be made both certaine other speculations, as beames, Coates, blasynge starres, and also that which is called Thlora, that is a flame or burning: and he sayeth yf that vapour be kindled & shut forth it self wide and brode, it seemeth

The history of strange wonders.

meth oftentimes to burne like a flame as strawe when it is kyndled in the felde. &c. Of vapours truly (by the opinion of the sayde Philosopher) which be sene in y^e high aire in the cleare nightes, some in dede burne and that longe time, as blaspyng starres: some a short time, as flames torches, goates, shutpyng starres. Some other appeare to be somewhat that thei be not and they may properly be called horrible syghtes: as cloudes somewhat cleare of colour, but chiefely red of colour and purple or bloudy: for other colours can scantly appeare, namely such as arise by y^e reflexion of beames or such as by comixion be white & fiery. Likewise such as be called gapyngs or pitres. &c. And there be also which thinke that there be suche colours in dede. And it mai be thought that somtyme bloodye cloudes be in dede and somtyme do appeare so. For we haue red often that ther hath rained blood and sometime that it only appeareth so, by the reflexion of the light. Truly it is not to be doubted but that both ther be and also appeareth or semeth a bloody

The history of strange wonders.

a bloody colour of burnyng in y^e night and of flames, chiefely seyng the flame or the inflamed matter and substance so thicke. And perchaunce more in the winter when vapours to be inflamed or in dede in flames breake out of the earth go vp, by an ayre that is colde and moyste and grosse, euen as of a grene peace of woode the flames appeare to be more red. Peradventure some beyng persuaded by these philosophicall reasons, wyllynk this our wondrous or strange token (or bloodye colour or fyre they wyllynk name it rather a flame or celestiall burnyng) utterly to be a naturall thyng, and such as the causes thereof maye be sufficiently gathered out of the very bosome of nature: and to be token nothyng els but peradventure some naturall effect: as some mutation of the ayre and of the constitution and course of the yere: or some pestilence at hand or immediatly following: amonge the signes of the whych nature thei learned are wonte to put fyre speculations, as gapynges, burnynges, comets, shutpyng starres, &
B.i. other

The history of strange wonders.

other thynges that by nyght maye be perceyued in the ayre. For although in this tyme of the wynter vapours boate and drie, and to be inflamed, are not wont to breake out of the earth: notwithstanding (he sayth) it is to be thought that they beyng the longer shut in the earth with great frost, being the moze abundantly gathered together, breake out at the length with moze violence when the wayes be opened, and being raised vpon high in the hyghest ayre the heate beyng restrained by a repulsion and let, or els that that colour was made by the beames of the sonne then beyng neare to the risynge being either kindled or els only appearyng by reflexion and turning backe againe: and those whyte furrowes were beames of the Sunne brought in that part onely whereon the substance of the vapours being gathered together was thynne. For the beames of the Sunne appeare muche more in the high mountaines then in the lower places. Also as it is written in histories, thys hath also happened in other places. And greates
bur,

The history of strange wonders.

burnings haue appeared for many vapours were gathered being long shut within the earth by the strength of colde, and chiefly in places of mountains whose bellies and waies be for the most part full of such vapours. These and suche lyke thynges perchance me that are curious in philosophie, or also vtterly godlesse, as Epicure and suche other couetous persons will put furth, and so perswade vs by this meane to feare nothyng. The authour Cicero of diuination (sayeth) this only reason, by the opinion and testimonie of the expositors of monstrous thynges auailleth against all shewes monsters and wonders. If that whiche coulde neuer be done, be done, if it maye not be to be meruailed at. And so it to be no monstrous thing or wonder that may be done. But it was some great strength whych opened the shuttynge of the earth, by it it may appeare. Because that in some places about midnight an earthquake went before: as certain watchmen did obserue it at Surick, and certain other hard the shaw
B.ii. kyng

The history of strange wonders.

kyng of yron instruments and plats of glasse, other saw gapyng in maner of pittes, and the dai before the earth opened neare unto Tubinga. So thei do iudge that are indued with mans wisdom. But we out of the holpe scriptures, and out of the treasure of the eternall and diuine wisdom, and out of the trew mouth of our lord, say that such wonders be sent from god, god doyng it other aboue nature, or contrary to nature, or els vsyng naturall thynges to the signifyng of hys wyl, we saye and do beleue it, also histories do witnes, that alwayes great calamities haue folowed after suche wonders.

Out of the booke of Iulius, of prodigies or wonders: made .xos. yere after the makyng of the cytye.

T. Gracco M. Inuentio Coss. amōg other wonders that he rehearseth, sayth: that the soyme of two Sunnes were sene in the day, the ayre burned there was often lightnyng, storme and tempest.

M. Scipio Nasica Cn. Martio Coss. it is red, that the ayre in the nyght burned

The history of strange wonders.

burned, and much lightning fell.

P. African and Lelio Coss. ryuers of blood flowed out of the earth, and in the night y aire was sene to burne A star dyd burne by the space of two and thyrtye dayes.

C. Cecilio Cn. Pappio Coss. in the night the mount of Albane was sene to burne, houses burnte with lightning and tokens out of heauen. The lande of Lucensis gaped abroade. In Fraunce the aire was sene to burne. The Danes and the Dutchmen passed the Alpes, brake the league and made murder of the romaynes and theyr felowes.

C. Lelio. L. Domitius Coss. among other prodigies or wonders whiche he rehearseth saith: In Italy a burning torch appeared in the ayre, and all the aire was sene to burne.

L. Martio, S. Iulio Coss. in y lande of Anaria the earth opened & a flame arose vp, & dyd shene in the element. About the land of Belgium, parte of the Citie that is towarde the Sea was ouerthrowne wth an yearthquake.

The history of strange wonders.

Seneca in hys fyrst booke of naturall questions and. xv. chapter describeth a wonder or strange thyng like vnto ours.

Amonge the lightnings (sayeth he) whiche the Grekes call Sela, maye put that fyre that was in the ayre, & we haue red it often times in histories, the which burnyng was so high that sometimes it was sene amonge the starres, and sometymes so lowe, that it semed some fire a far of. A company of men of war vnder Tiberius the emperour (beyng amased when the aire for the most part of the night did burne) ranne to Colone for succour, the fyre not beyng cleare but grosse and smokye. Of these lightnyngs no man douteth but they haue a flame which they shewe, it is a certaine substaunce of them. But in the former lightnings was a bolw and a crowne of some certaine substaunce, but it pleased vs not. &c.

Out of the booke of Polidor Virgill of wonders and strange thynges.

In

The history of strange wonders.

In the yere of our saluacion. C. xlii. a burnyng lyght in maner of a towre wyth great byghtnes was sene to fall out of the ayre: when Jerusalem was taken of the Turkes.

Wonders or strange thynges taken out of the reheral of M. Fryschy of Laubany.

In the yere of oure Lorde. M. C. xl. the aire was sene to bourne oftentimes, and many starres were sene to fall from out of the skye into the earht. Burning lightes, fyre dartes, and flyinge fires, were often tymes sene in the aire. Fewe starres were sene. Celestial fires arose mani waies. There was sene in the ayre a bryghte fyre, a company of horsemen and fote men to fight together, and cities, and swordes, and bloody wapours, were also sene. &c.

In the yere. M. C. and. xx. There was sene in the aire bloody cloudes, a crosse, and a whyte man. Euen at y time men thought a destruction shuld come vpon y whole world. It is writ ten in Chronicles, that suche strange things doe signifie ciuill warres.

B. iiii. Of

The history of strange wonders.

Of those thynges whych folowed,
you may reade at length in þe Chroni-
cles of Boem, set furth by Auentyne
in the lease. D. C. xv.

In the yere. M. CCC. lxxv. the aire
was sene to burne all night.

In the. M. D. L. three fyre globes
wer sene in the aire in þe night in Mis-
nia Lipsia, which certaine students &
famous men did beholde.

The yere M. D. L. I. the xxviii. day
of January at Allisbon in Doxtingal
were sene in the aire bloody roddees,
and horrible fyres, & it rayned bloode
also. Furthermoze there was such an
earthquake that two hundred houses
were terrible shaken and throlwen
downe in þe which shaking moze then
a thousand men perished.

The yere. M. D. L. IIII. the first
day of February at Cathalane a citie
of Fraunce, after the musteringe of
the hoste whiche the kyng of France
had commaunded to be done in that
place, a wonderful strange sight was
sene about the Moone. For a greate
fire arose from the East part, & went
to the west. And the Moone semed in
maner

The history of strange wonders.

maner of a mighty great fire brande.
The flame of thys fyre raged wyth
great noyse, often castyng oute bla-
syng sparkes in the ayre, none other-
wyse then when a smith beateth vpon
hoat iron: thus saith Fritschius. Ari-
stotle nameth such fyre a goat.

The answer of a godly learned frende
vnto the aforesayde letter or Epistle.

By letters. A. C. were giuen vn-
to me with the boke of wonders.
For the which your gentlenes I
geue you moste heartye thankes. At
your departure you byd declare all
thinges abundantly and very plain-
ly. In the meane tyme I praye God
that for his mercy sake he wyll turne
al things to þe best. For to styre you
vp, I haue added many things which
you shall here reade.

The signification of the strange
wonder.

All men doe confesse wyth one
mouth, this vnaccustomed strange
wonder to signifie som great euil
to these countreys: so I thinke þe cau-
ses of the sayde euill, to be so neare
vnto

The history of strange wonders.

vnto vs, that it shall perse y eies and mindes of all men. And seying for the most part the calamities of mankind be sermons of repentance, although the common people through erreure do alledge mani other causes of euils not wandpng this fire of y apze is an euident argumēt: token of y wzath of god, that without it be a few I think there is none so foolyshe or so mad, which vnderstandeth not that it is to come. We beleue verely that we shal not be cast out of blisse, because it seemeth that we shalbe so punyshed for oure sinnes: because that the crosse & aduersitie doth byng alwayes more profit vnto the churche, then rest and slouthfulnesse. Of this commeth the common Prouerbe.

The bloode of the Martyrs watereth the Garden of the Lorde.

But although our enemies farre exceede vs in all kynd of euyl, yet notwithstanding we be not much inferior vnto them. Superfluitie is a profitable instrument & occasion, you wyll saye the moste parte of vs do want it, not superfluitie. Religion also on oure part

The history of strange wonders.

parte is a lytle neglected & beginneth to be gainfull, no lesse truly then the Romains in time passed. For we shal finde but a few diuines whiche wyll vouchsafe to seke poore Christ in the cotage and stable. Manye of them couet fat benefices, for the whiche they serue none other wyse then thei wold serue for y sacrifice of the aultar. For that cause is there so much hatred, so much pryncy backbiting which encreaseth dayly and hourly more & more, y ther is none more deuided the thei, in who ought to be most loue & conoord. These be the times which Eusebius setteth furth in the beginning of hys his eyghte booke vpon ecclesiasticall histories: who desireth any Dioclesian whych may restore the weake members vnto their health agayne.

God truly gouerneth hys church by fyre, the whiche name is called in scripture crosse and persecution, which notwithstanding as I hope shall not be longe, no more then this monstrous fire was longe, whiche lasted with vs no more then an houre, and that before day lyght. For the Psalmo graffe

The history of strange wonders.

mograsse compareth the fure of the
vngodly lyke vnto fyre amongst the
thornes, which maketh a feruent fire
and when it appeareth to be most ve-
hement, then suddenly it falleth and
is tourned into ashes.

But although thys fyre wyth hys
heate dyd inwrap the hyghest moun-
taines, therefore not onely the base
states but also the highe monarches
shall come to ruine: notwithstanding
the stars whiche shone betwene, that
is, the ministers of the churche shall
not be put oute of their seate: which
setting the worde of god befoze theyr
face, shall shyne in darke night of per-
secution by the cleare light of the gos-
pell vntyll the daye wished for ware
bryght, and the Sun of righteousness
shyne vpon me. But one star was sene
to fall from heauen, which being dra-
wen by y^e fyre dyd furrow in the mid-
dest. It is to be thought, that one do-
ctour or other, either for feare of the
greate threatnyng, or els being dra-
wen by hope of some promotion, shall
be cast out of his degre. Therefore the
Lord is to be praised vnto, that he wil
defende

The history of strange wonders.

defende vs standing in the confession
of a sincere faith. For this cause it is
good for all godly men to thinke that
the scourge of the lord is afore their
dores: whome notwithstanding they
by the mouyng of chaunces shall get,
god onely knoweth which ruleth the
causes of all thinges. We wyll onely
bryng those thyngs which be like the
truth, and seme not disagreeble from
the worde of God. For the worde of
the lord ought to be a lantarne to our
feete, and a light to oure stppes. By
it we may learn better y^e cause of our
aduersities, then may be perceiued by
any such wonders, which god sendeth
commonly for the reprobate and stiffe
necked men, amongst whome the
worde of God taketh no place, that
all their excuses may be cut awayne.
Notwithstanding I do not deny that
there be Sermons of repentaunce,
whych not wythstandynge they that
are destitut of the gouernment of the
word of god do take neuer the latter.
For we see vngodly and wycked men
whych beyng associat with y^e vnbele-
uynge Jewes, require a sygne from
heauen,

The history of strange wonders.

heauen, which if it apeare, then with full voyce they crye out, oure synnes require such wonders: but they of the part of the euangelicall doctrine, doe beare these thinges patiently and deriue part from them selues to other, and every one that speaketh of repentance with the mouth, seldom doth it in dede. The only Christians in whō the light of the worde of god shyneth knowledg their synnes, and by the helpe of god studieth to refozme their lyfe to a better state, whome in these present calamities this one thing can comfort them, that they vnderstande god by his syngular grace to tourne theyr deserued paynes into martyrdome: through whiche is caused that they also comfort themselves, in whō is this gyfte of God, that not onely they beleue in Christ, but also suffer for hys name sake. For although our synnes be greate, yet notwithstanding we shall not feele the furpe of the chiefe enemyes of Christ, but for the sincere confession of the saythe, whych we maye declyne from yf we wyll go from the doctrine of the gospel.

The history of strange wonders.

pell. The almighty and greate God for his diuine grace, and singuler aide of the holy gost, vouchsafe to kepe vs Amen.

The authour answereth againe to this fyrste epistle: and approueth it, not wythstandyng (sayth he) the stars whiche fell out of that fyrre wonder, I had rather interpretate to signifie the aduersarye of Christe with hys, which as hitherto haue bene counted as starres, and shal fall headlong out of heauen as Lucifer dyd, &c. What is they shall fall from that vsurped authoritie which they now haue, which the authour of all wonders and effectes grant. So be it.

Certayne Eglogs taken out of diuers epistles of credible men, and certayne prynted bookes, prynted at Norynbergh and Vinaria, briefly set furth vpon the same wonder: so that it doth agre wyth those epistles or letters set oute afore, whych were almost omitted.

That monstrous fyre was not sene at August, Windelicozū, nor near about it, but it was sene not far from August: as about Neurzā, Landspergen,

The history of strange wonders.

gen, Rozenberg, and in the dukedom of Wirtenberge, in Belgicke, and also towarde Hungarie, within three dayes after Christenmas, but not in all these places on one daye: So that many of the neyghbozs thought that it dyd burne, and ranne to quench it: and the fyre fallynge from heauen in another place made them soze afraid: This did a certayne noble man write in his epistle or letter. We read in a printed lease that this fyre was sene towarde Cecelhempe, Frochhempe, & Bamberge: likewise at Campodune and in many other places. And a credible man wrote vnto vs that it was sene in the region of Tlme and in Athesna: Likewise at Lindauia, and in the monarchie of Bauaria, neare vnto August (not wstandynge it was not sene in the cite of August) also towarde Lienna, and about Anwarpe. In the booke printed at Tlinaria, we read that thys strange wonder was sene, the ayre beyng cleare & no cloudes at all, so that it occupied & fourth parte of the heauen wyth such brightness that one might easely see and perceyue

The history of strange wonders.

ceyue anye thyng. For the fire was great brode and longe (in maner as if some great cite had ben wholly al of fyre) disseuered wth the white strakes or furrowes of the which the one part appeared of the colour of bloode tempered with some other thing, and the other part was somewhat thicker, & the last part at the goyng away of it, it was compassed about with a darke and thicke cloude. Other sayde that the white strakes were sene at the beginninge wth the fire, not beyng verye red aboute the middest, but a certayne clearnes mixte wth rednesse, through which also the starres appeared. In some places warning was geuen by ringyng of & belles to quench the fire. The foresayde fyre, as farre as men coulde iudge, remoued from the East vnto the West: other write that it began from the North in maner of a cloude: and it semed as it wer casting flames of fyre from it like vnto starres. At the first it was sene thre dayes and a halfe, at the lest an houre and a halfe afore dape, it lasted about an houre and an halfe, and vanished C.i. away

The history of strange wonders.

away almost an houre afore dai. Out of letters written from Constance to vs. The next day after Childermas day in the ayre were sene certayne great and longe speares: two crosses the one of them was whyte, what the other was it is not thewed, and a rodde was sene in the ayre in maner of red bloode, so that some were ready to crie fyre. Certayne fishermen that were on the river aboute two of the clocke after midnight dyd see this great and bygght monstrous thyng which continued vntil fyre a clocke, but towarde Turgaia and Heluitia was sene a starre wyth fyue seuerrall beames which were about threepards longe, & in other places it seemed in maner of a Hunters staffe.

The report goeth, that aboute Kosenilla a certayne heate was hearde in the ayre, even as it had bene liquored boylunge in a pottle, the which by and by wente downe into the nexte hyll, and there wythin a whyle after it made the same noyse in the earth that it dyd before in the ayre. And as the letters doe testifie, which were sent

The history of strange wonders.

sent from Memminga.

On Childermas daye betwene fyue and fyre of the clocke in the morninge, moore then the space of an whole houre, was sene in the ayre a great and an vnaccustomed rednes, towarde the north: in maner lyke vnto the fashion of an hemicycle and then it remoued somewhat towarde the South, and bare before it the lykenes of burnyng fyre, by reason whereof in certayn villages the bells were ronge to gyue warning, to help to quenche it.

In another part of this rednes appeared whyte sorrowes: the which by and by went out of syght lyke vnto red fyre flames, so that they were sene thynnyng by reason of the brightness of the flame.

Another parte of it was discolored and all red in maner of bloode, and terrible of syght. The aire at first was not perceyued, and through this rednes the starres were sene to cast out their beames. A mā that watched in a towre at Suricke, saide that about midnight he felt an earthquake.

C.ii. And

The history of strange wonders.

And a certain crafts man which was a glazier marueyled at the sodden shakings of the glasse in þ night, where of I maruaile that it was noted of none other, nor sene any where elles that we can heare. Oute of another epistle written by a certaine learned man. This wonder of the fyre in the ayre was not sene at Berne, but in þ fielde there were many that sawe it. I heare of nothyng that was sene beyonde Berne towarde Fraunce, nor at Friburge, nor at Lausanne. They do shewe of a certaine monstrous thing sene in the fielde of Berne there appeared a fyre globe in the whiche a beare and a lyon seemed to fight together. In the dominion of Gruenensis they write that a globe of fire did flye so nere a byllage, that a husbände man was a frayed of the burnyng of his house, because the fire was sene so neare vnto the top of the house. These thynges I wyte by report to satisfie your request butyll I knowe them more certainely. Thus sayde he.

Another writeth that in the fielde
of

The history of strange wonders.

of Berne was sene another wonder of an hoste of men fyghtyng together but the authour I know not.

Also after thys foresayde wonder of fyre that was sene in the aire, that is the thyrty day of December, which was the last yere. M. D. LX. at eyght a clocke befoze none, there was sene a fyre to aryse about Wade of Heluetia with a great thicke cloude.

And when the husbände men of Regenspurg (which towne is in þ fild of Surick) saw it thei ran together being ready to quench it: by and by it vanished away, so that it was not perceived whether any fyre had ben in that place or no. Not withstanding, this also may be thought to be a certaine wonder.

¶ The interpretation of the strang wonder, set furth by the authour, written vnto a frende of his dwelling in Vindelick a countrey of Germany.

I Geue you moste hearty thanks, that you do part amongst vs your interpretation vpon that fearefull and monstrous syghte, whyche you
C. lii. did

The history of strange wonders.

did not onely se in the aire at Helne-
tia and Ranie, but at Algea and thro-
rough out all Suecia, excepte at Aus-
spurge, in which no man, no not the
watche men, did see any thing that
daye, when not withstanding it was
sene two or thre mile of, and the good
neighbourers there thought Auspurge
dyd burne, and they did lamentablye
beholde the dukedom of Wirtenberg
Franconia & Thuringa, at the same
houre and moment when ye did se it.
I haue no naturall philosophie that
thereby I might coniecture it to com,
for in such a dead and cold tyme there
coude not happen such vapours nor
such exhalations, that mighte cause
such fyre to appear euery where: nor
yet was the cause of the earthquake
knowne amonge you, seing it was
heard to be no where els. Therefore
I come to your interpretacion: and I
hope that Christ wyll come shortly &
reuenge his worde, & iudge the world
by fyre: wythout you had rather thus
to expounde it, that in all places
wher this fyre was sene, the fire of h
gospel shal so purely cleanse the pro-
ple

The history of strange wonders.

ple that all sparkes and ashes shalbe
blowen quite away. But at Bavar
and Austria where this fire did not
appeare, they shal perishe in darke-
nesse, excepte God be mercifull vnto
them.

Of certayne other straunge tokens
and wonders.

The day before the fyre was sene
in the ayre, that is the seuen and
twenty day of December, in the
ende of the yere. M. D. LX. betwene
the towne of Tubinga and the duke
dome of Wirtenberge and the villa-
ge of Jelsingam, which is two miles
distant from Tubinga, soddenly in a
certaine fielde there appeared a golfe
which was fire and thirty fote depe,
twenty fote broad, and about y earth
no more then a common pitte, round
of compas, cōteinyng of depth in wa-
ter nine fote. Other spreade false ru-
mors abrode & say that it was of such
a depth that it could not be expresse.
Also it is sayde, that it rained bloode
about the same time in many places
of Germany.

The history of strange wonders.

The thirtene day of December, the yeare. M. D. LX. at Vienna and Austria, there was an earthquake and a great tempest, and fearefull lightening. Towres, houses, and the Cathedral church of Saint Steven was burnt with lightening. The ayre was sene burne a longe tyme, as a certayne noble man of Windelicke in his letters doeth witnes vnto vs.

We knowe for a suertye that lately in Fraunce, when the king had assembled y head men of a citi together into hys owne presence: behold there appeared a great comet ouer the city which continued as long as y assemble endured: that is. xxviii. dayes, in the yeare. M. D. LX. in the moneth of December.

¶ Of wonders or strange thyngs sene in the countrey of Pymont. Taken out of the letters written to a certain prince in the yeare. 1560. in the moneth of December.

At Chirasyn a fyre was sene in y aire which lasted thre houres. At Trauil

The history of strange wonders.

Trauilla it rayned bloode as many houres, that is to wit, thre houres. At Fosan were sene as it were, thre fyre cometes. In the plaine next vnsentalp there appeared a great number of horsemen in the ayre. At Caragnan ther was sene an earthquake which sounded lyke the wheles of a waggon. At Vinaroly was sene in y aire the maner of a fyre linnen cloth: and many other strang wonders wer sene in sundrie other places.

¶ Of the heauenly goat (for so Aristotle calleth it) there was sene at Cathaline, a notable towne of Fraunce commonly called Cholos, in the pere of our lorde. M. D. L. XXX. the fyrte day of the moneth of Marche, betwen seuen and eyght of the clocke at after none, aboute the Moone a burnynge fyre, in the which was sene, as it had bene the poynt of a speare, going fro the East vnto y West, & castyng out flames and fearful great burnynge. As Conrade Lycosthenes writteth in his boke of monstercous and straunge wonders.

The history of strange wonders.

Of strange wonders and prodigious thynges, sene in the ayre in the begynnyng of the yere. 1556.

In the begynnyng of the yere of our Lorde, a thousande, syue hundred fiftie and syre: On a Sondaye after Christenmas day about the evynge tyme, was sene with vs that dwell about Lauinga (as a certayne contre man of ours writ in a letter to a frende of hys) a great lyghtnyng and it thundered exceedinglye, and not farre of from vs, a house standing in a village was stricken with lyghtnyng and burnt downe. And the ayre opened verie wyde and brode, and dyd belche oute great and bright flames of fyre. The whiche tempest was about nyne of the clock at nyght, manye of the people were wonderfully astonied and sore afraid in so muche that many of them were domme a longe tyme after.

Out of another Epistle or letter of the same wonder: the same daye at nyght in Bohem, Silesia, and Misnia, there was a terrible tempest, and

The history of strange wonders.

and many men, cattell, great towres and churches wer stricken with lightnyng and perished with fyre. Also it rained bloode and fyre. A towne of Melnicca foure myles distant from Praga, all the grounde of it was wyllygh consumed with fire. The church of our Lady at Praga was burnt with lightnyng: and the church of S. Anne that is in the mount was lyke wise burned. Two Churches being about two mile distant from Lipsia, were also burnt with lightning. And it rained blood abundantly in y same place: and two camelles were sene in the ayre deuouring a harnessed man.

In the same yere. M. D. L. V. the eleuenth day of January, at August and Windelick towarde the Alpes, in the night the air opened, and burned for a while most fearefull to beholde, and seemed to threaten to be the latter day. At Mickenhusa in Banaria, ther was sene in y night such brightness, that y candle light in Zeta waxed darke, and when the candles were put out, the brightness of the aire sufficed the for light, thre houres space. The

The history of strange wonders.

The same yere of our lord a thousand fyue hundred and thre score, the fyfth day of September in the towne of Marchia and Custerine, at nyne a clocke at after noone. Innumerable flames of fyre dyd shyne on euery side in the aire wth great brightnes. And in the myddes of the element there appeared two spy^{re} beames. To cōclude, as I read moreouer, in an vnknown autho^r, a voyce was heard which said woe, woe, vnto the churche. Thus sayeth James Fincelius, w^{ty}ng of the wonders done in hys tyme

¶

Of certaine vvonderfull STRAUNGE
visions and merueylous
tokens.

¶ Out of the Prologue of Joachim Camerary of Wabe, in the Chronicle of Nicephorus, translated by him into Latine and expounded, which booke was printed at Basill by John Dporinus.

After that I chaunced to liue in that tyme in the whiche the common wealth hangeth either in miserable ruine, either in pernicious alteration, or els in very vehement and troublesome affayres. Trulye (good reader) I can not heartely reioyce, nor inwardly be merueyld, wth any ryches or honour that is coueted or desired in the publik weale. For I pray you what is done or attempted almoste in any place, that pertaineth not vnto the decay of the common wealth? What obstinacie is in men? What malice and hatred? What couetousnes and greedy gathering? What desire

The history of strange wonders.

desyre of reuengement: That ambitious lust to rule: Notwithstanding these things be couered, and do cloke them selues vnder moſte honoſte names, as conſtancie, magnanimitie or valiaunt corage, ſeneritie, and dignitie or honour. And by the law of God and man, many are compelled to obey theyr malice. Amonges these thyngs nothyng almost is done by deliberat counsell, and neither is any paynes taken in prouidyng and lokyng diligently to things of importance, neyther any chaungyng of sentence or any correction for vice. All things be lawfull to them that be in authoritie and are mightye. Velle thynges are made vnholye: publycke thynges are made private: peace is touned into stryfe: so that there is no order set in thynges. Euery ſtate, and degre, and condicion, is geuen ouer to mocking and disdeyning. Deadly hatred is exercised in euery place: to the fulfilling of the which hatred helpe is ſone called from euery syde. They do practise crueltie and tyranny lyke vnto the brutthe Barbarians. The which being

The history of strange wonders.

ing of them selues moſte ſilthye and vile, doe all thynges contrarie to the lawes and ordinaunces of the elders: the common wealth which the good men left vnto their posteritie, among these, muſt of neceſſitie perſhe and vterly decaye. But although the ſituation of the ſtarres, and manye ſtraunge and monſterous things doe foreſhelue and warne vs of this: not wythſtandynge the moſte euident tokens of the mutations of the former cauſes, by the whiche may lawfully be taken moſte certayne conſectures of that which is to com. Which to declare in a ſew wordes ſhall not be (as I thynke) diſagreable to the matter. And the foretellings of aſtologic, of the mouing of ſtarres, of the eclipsis and conuention of the Sun & moone and of the flames of the comets, be al moſt knowen vnto euery man: other wonders alſo for their oftencs do the leſſe moue mens myndes. But what viſions haue bene ſene aſwell by the that waked as them that ſlept (interpreted by ſothſaiers) it wer to long to declare or rather infinite.

One

The history of strange wonders.

One thynge I doe remember well, (if a mā may lawfully speake on this fashon) I did se in my dreame one ho-ly and heauenly likenes or picture. A certayne good and godly man dyd see with in these fewe yerres in a visi-on (as it semed vnto hym) a great ar-mye of men dyd skermishe and fyghte together, and were ready with theyr weapons in their handes to fyre vil-lages, towncs, & citie, and to waste & destroye the fieldes: manye men fell down: yet not wythstandyng it could not be perceyued who had the victory. Also this battel was so intermeddled that it coulde not clearly be sene of whome it was done nor agaynst whome. In one place also he behelde, and sawe fyue wyptynges or scriptu-res, of fyue distincte and chaungeable coloures, in þ which was thewed di-uers names & diuers sentēces, which were sene in þ aire after this maner.

Blacke for the Jewes, and Moses lawe. Whyte for the Christians and onely sayth of Christe. Welowe of the pardons of the byshop of Rome. Red for the Turkes, Saracenes, Paho-meth

The history of strange wonders.

hometh the messenger of onely God: Pelowishe, for the workes and liber-ties of the Anabaptists. What these thynge do signifie can not be hyd to any man that wyll studye to knowe what shal happen wythin these fewe yerres, and what is now done.

Aboute the same tyme, the maner of a longe historye was sene in the cloudes: whiche afterwarde was set furth in a picture, drawen out and pu-blished at Welgicke, in thys maner hereafter folowyng.

There appeared an armed man on horsebacke wyth a speare charged in his hande, and readye for to runne a course. And besydes thys, was sene the lykenesse of the Emperour Char-les the fyfth, with a crowne vpon his heade: and neare vnto it a hogges snoute, somewhat hygher there was sene two Lyons rampinge and lea-ping agaynst thre other Lions: and a lytle beneth them, two great Dra-gons spuyng out flames of fyre.

And after thys was sene great ar-mies of men of warre, aswell by sea as by lande, and euerye where was
D.1. cruell

The history of strange wonders.

ruell burning of townes and castels
and villages. And ther was also sene
in the ayre a Pecoche wythout fete
haupng no wynges : and neare unto
hym there was a Dragon. Also in the
same place was an Egle haupng the
greatest parte of hym hyd behynde a
banke : and aboute the banke was a
lytle Egle. Lykelwise was sene a Li-
on crowned lying on hys backe, who
a Cocks dyd strycke on the throte.
After this there were gathered toge-
ther many and diuers beastes, wyth
horrible formes and shapys : and all
monstrous beastes, except the wylde
Unicoorne which the Grekes doe call
Monoceros, and a verpe sayre and great
huge Elephant. By and by another
armye of men appeared agayne bur-
nyng and destroying : and a Cocks
defendyng hym selfe agaynst a Lyon
whose head was semed to be cut of.
And laste of all, there was sene a
great lake, in the whych were draw-
ned (as they doe declare) townes, and
great Churches, theyr steeple beynge
sene to appeare aboue the water: and
a Camell was sene alone vpon the
banke

The history of strange wonders.

bancke, with his head in y lake dryn-
kyng. Wonderfull many flampng
Dragons were sene, breathyng out
flames of fyre and much benym eue-
ry where.

Unto me truly these thynges seme
not vnpossible to chaunce, specially
and chiefly to those people whych
doe trouble and molest the worlde in
this oure age, with great verations
and soze afflictions.

Furthermoze, it is declared vnto
vs, that thys yere there are very ma-
nye monstrous byrthes, bothe of
mankynde, and also of many and di-
uers other kyndes of beastes.
Amonge the which, was the notable
great Monkecalfe (that is a calfe like
a Monke) and before hym an Asse, a
man, and a fishe, of mixed formes and
diuers shapys. And after that there
came furth another monster whiche
was a fysh lyke a Monke.

For in the bowels of the man was
founde iron (as we haue often tymes
proued it trew) what doth that signi-
fie but inwarde commocion or ciuill
hatred or stryffe?

D. II.

There

The history of strange wonders.

Therefore these thynges shewyng
them selues so often tymes, and so
wonderfull, berelye we ought to vn-
derstande and to thynke, that the mo-
uing and workyng of nature is wra-
sted out of frame, and the state and
condicion of men to be tourned out of
course, & that the effectes of nature be-
ing weake & sicke may no longer con-
tinue nor endure: for euen as monste-
rous byrthes doe not lyue longe, so
likewyse the degenerate and monste-
rous state of this corrupt world shall
not laste longe.

As I doe remembre (and as I sayd
before to certayne men whiche tolde
me, that a mayde at Athenie lyued
wythout meate and drynke) I dyd tel
the how that she could not lyue long
nor continue without foode: as if one
shoulde saye, it were a wonderfull
and a merueylous thyng to be done,
yf that common wealthe shoulde not
decaye and peryshe, where the rulers
(which ought onely to nourishe and to
upholde the same) eyther be not able
to gouerne it, or elles be farre absent
and a great way from it.

But

The history of strange wonders.

But we see most manifest signes and
evident tokens of forewarnyng.

For as by the rysyng and the goyng
downe of the Sunne, we knowe the
commynge of the day & the nyght. So
in lyke maner I doe suppose, that af-
ter the breakyng vp and dissoluyng
of the lawe and discipline of the chri-

stian common wealthe, some great
fall and destruction muste of

necessitie folow, and

after lyke sort

we maye

con-

iecture other iocoperdyes and

daungers for to

come.

To God be all honoꝛ and glory, for
these and all other his wonder-
ful workes, declared and shew-
ed vnto vs.

So be it.

PSALME. 19.

The heauens declare the glory of God,
and the firmament sheweth the
worke of hys hand.

Imprynted at Lon
don by Roulande
Hall dwellinge in
Goldynge Lane at
the signe of the
three arro-
vves.

1561.